



TheatreVision™

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CS 97-141



July 28, 1997

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

Ms. Marcia Glauberger
Cable Services Bureau
Federal Communications Commission
1919 M Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Ms. Glauberger:

Re: CS Docket Number 97-141

Putting together my response to the FCC was difficult. There were so many things to say when you are blind and have found a way out of the darkness through TheatreVision's video-description; and yet in the pages that I know you must all read, I am acutely aware that you will never read and understand all of the details and moments of joy that a blind person can receive from just one simple thing. . . audio-description by TheatreVision.

Because I am blind, I have created a very powerful tool for motion picture theaters in Los Angeles, choosing the most current high quality Academy Award-winning films, and the most powerful voices in the entertainment industry. I have made an all out effort to bring together the studio leaders, producers, directors, actors and actresses to put their "hearts to the word" that is creating an audio-description project I call TheatreVision which holds more promise for bringing the blind into the social realities of life than any other tool since braille.

Realizing that it took 25 years for captioning to get its position in television viewing, I am encouraging the commission to not allow that to happen to video-description. I am asking the powers that be who read these documents and make these decisions, to take into consideration the very dedicated and all out effort TheatreVision has made in Los Angeles to accomplish great goals in a very, very short period of time. These goals include the availability to deliver at an inexpensive cost, audio-description to television programming in a timely and artistic fashion.

A rule of thumb to begin video-description by TheatreVision for network programming would be two and one-half hours per day, and evening being first choice, graduating to all programming being described as describers become available.

I have discovered many, many ways to get around nearly all of the problems that will confront the networks, cable owners and satellite corporations who might consider audio-description a "nuisance" or expense. I say to them it is not unaffordable, but what is unaffordable is to exclude

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FCC/Marcia Glauberman

July 28, 1997

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description from viewers who have a potential for learning and achieving via television programming.

Thank you for including my comments as I am able to develop them to add to my original comments.

Sincerely,

Helen Harris

Helen Harris
President and Founder

HH:ag

enc.

SUGGESTED TIMELINE FOR TELEVISION PROGRAMMING TO BE AUDIO-DESCRIBED BY THEATREVISION

Most blind people will gravitate to television in the way sighted people do. They have the same habits; however, because of the delivery of television programming, and the hope of overcoming an awesome and overwhelming task, TheatreVision has created a plan that believes that the introduction of TheatreVision's description can be done over a period of time, targeting the most important rounded programming for viewing by visually challenged until all programming has been described.

Each broadcast network, major cable channels such as HBO, Showtime, Disney, A & E, TBS, Bravo, Encore, TNT and others could be described with at least one program per evening with a realistic target of choosing the highest rated movie of the week as first choice.

Description of the morning shows such as Good Morning America, The Today show and the CBS Morning show would be easy and brief, describing what the viewers are seeing on the screen, even briefly, would make audio-description an enjoyment of "what Katie looks like" a reality for the blind.

Secondly, the description of talk shows should be when possible. All talk shows should be described, as possible, understanding that very top rated shows such as "Oprah" would receive description.

Third, All "Soaps" would be eligible for video-description because much of the soap opera technique is in the unsaid word, not in the spoken word. It is TheatreVision's opinion that at least three soaps from each of the networks should be described every day, and these can be selected by choosing the most watched Nielson ratings.

Evening news would be described as it is occurring, and would briefly tell the viewer "what is on the screen" as time permits. The evening television viewer is the most important television viewing audience. Just as sighted people gather in front of the television sets, so do blind people. So that all television evening programming would be targeted for description, with first choice being: 1) movie of the week type motion picture.

The midnight to 5:00 A.M. movies should be described for late-night watchers, with the priority being best movie per day or per week that has been previously been rated by the "rating people."